

In attendance: Alex Kaylor and Juan Garza, Adams; Stacey Cadden and Robyn Berndt, Yakima; Ellen Schwannecke, Kittitas; Jack Murphy, Douglas; Tina Cochran, Chelan; Andrew Gelstein, Okanogan; Windy Tevlin, Whitman; Grant Dotts, Stevens; Jules Leighton, Asotin, Rick Bomar and Diane Wavra, Grant; Chris Hayes, Snohomish/ART QA, Doug Kopp, JRA Olympia.

1. Introduction/Status of ART Programs

Counties that have started groups: Whitman, Grant, Asotin/Garfield, Adams (next week), Yakima, Chelan, Okanogan.

Counties that have not started: Kittitas, Stevens/Ferry/PO, Douglas,.

Problems starting groups: Center around risk assessment. 1.4 version is all most counties have, and it's not screening correctly. Several counties report risk assessment is crashing systems and computers. Some counties aren't networked, which is making risk assessments more difficult. In these cases, counties have to use discs to save risk assessments, and because so much info, can only use one disc per assessment. Technical assistance for risk assessment software is usually not helpful.

ART QA is for ensuring program quality across jurisdictions. While the risk assessment is critical, the ART QA group will be focusing on program quality, identifying and rectifying any perceived curriculum gaps, and establishing ART best practice for WA state.

2. Discussion of Initial Engagement of ART youth and families.

What's Worked:

Meeting with probation staff to explain and 'sell' ART. It was acknowledged that without PO buy-in, ART programs have more difficulties. Some counties are using POs as "the enforcers" of sanctions when youth don't come to group; in other counties, the POs are the ART facilitators. General agreement was reached that a "wrap-around" approach, where POs and ART facilitators are working together for the outcome of youth successfully completing ART is best practice. It was also acknowledged providing positive incentives from the outset helps with attendance and buy-in. (see Incentives below)

Meeting with youth and families well before groups start to 'sell' ART. There is a continuum of best practice here. In the best case, the court administrator, the ART facilitator and the PO gathered all ART youth and parents to present on the ART program. Each court person presented an aspect of why youth were expected to do ART. The outcome was parental support for their youth attending ART. This proactive 'one-big-team' approach has resulted in less attendance problems and more 'across-the-board' buy-in for ART. In other cases, the ART facilitator and the PO met with families or with youth 2 to 3 weeks prior to sell ART. Again, collaboration with probation has been effective. In another county, the ART

facilitator has made the majority of initial contacts. While proactive, this approach has the disadvantage of the ART person being more 'on their own' in the intervention.

Mailing out ART information packets initially and on an on-going basis to parents of ART youth. It was decided that we will put together 'initial ART packets' for counties to send youth and parents.

What hasn't worked is: 1) meeting with kids only briefly before group to establish buy-in and 2) taking an approach that only emphasizes that if the youth doesn't attend ART, they'll receive a probation violation and 3) not having probation 'on-board' with the ART intervention.

3. **Incentives:** While there's debate within departments about the logic of providing incentives, it was acknowledged that incentives keep ART interesting, is motivating, helps attendance and moves youth toward the outcome of successfully participating in and completing ART group. Incentives also seem to keep youth involved in the later stages of ART, when the novelty of ART has worn off and youth are becoming 'burnt-out.' **Incentives are highly recommended and essential for success in ART.**

Incentives that courts are using include:

- Having youth receive 1:1 community service hours for attending ART group;
- Arranging with schools for youth to receive class credit for completing ART;
- Arranging with local restaurants to donate pizzas/food coupons, that are then distributed to youth who successfully complete segments of ART;
- Decreasing other counseling expectations until ART is completed;
- Lessening curfew requirements for youth who are doing well in ART;
- Providing on-going positive feedback and material rewards during any given ART group;
- Providing + feedback to POs and the court when youth are doing well in ART;
- Providing + feedback to parents when youth are doing well in ART.

4. **Attendance.** All courts noted that ensuring on-going attendance is a challenge and has to be a consistent priority. It was acknowledged that *initial engagement* of youth, parents and probation has a positive impact on attendance. As well, *incentives* linked to attendance decreases youth absences. Courts also are doing the following to increase attendance:

- Calling youth in AM on the day of group to remind youth to attend ART;
- If youth misses ART group, then has to work 1:1 with the facilitator either before or after the next group. Make up session don't count for community service;
- Immediate phone call to parent if youth misses session;
- Immediate notification of PO if youth misses session;
- Establishing expectation that if youth is going to miss, then must call ahead and be excused by ART facilitator;
- Establish behavior contracts with youth up front that emphasize attendance.

What has not worked is setting out black and white expectations around attendance. For instance, stating that if the youth misses two sessions, then they're removed from group seems to have the effect of letting youth think they can miss two sessions. As well, because many times it's not the youth's fault that they didn't attend, the ART facilitator is placed in the position of either ignoring rules (with obvious effects on groups) or following through and removing youth when it is no one's best interest to do so. It was acknowledged that stating to youth, "you're expected to attend session and be on time; absences will be reported to your PO" seems to be effective. It leaves consequences ambiguous, but reinforces that there'll be consequences. It was noted that after the first couple of weeks, attendance is not as much of an issue as during the first couple of weeks.

5. **Make-Up Sessions:** it was determined that make-up sessions need to occur as quickly as possible so that the sequence of group isn't undermined. Each make-up session must include:

For Skills and Anger Control:

- Modeling by the facilitators;
- Role Play by the trainee;
- Because there is no other reinforcement from the group, the role play must be done perfectly before the make-up session is done.

For Moral Reasoning:

Facilitator and Trainee must discuss the problem situation. The facilitator relates the perspectives group members took. It was acknowledged that while the Moral Reasoning component is difficult, if not impossible to do a thorough make-up session for, it should still be done, if only to send a strong message about attending group.

6. **Transportation.** All counties are finding this to be a challenge. Courts are doing the following to address the issue:

- Having interns/volunteers/mentors transport. In addition, having the intern (et. al) reinforce ART and ensure youth have completed homework is a value added component one county has used.
- Having trackers transport. Again, if the tracker reinforces, then it's value added.
- Supplying youth with bus passes.
- In some instances, counties have told parents that they have to transport their kids to group. In many cases, after initial unwillingness, the parents have followed through.
- Having youth be picked up at a central location to decrease any transport time.